

Message Text

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10

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-13 SSM-03

/070 W

----- 103096

O P 200937Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3687

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL PORT SAID POUCH

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6907

EO 11652: GDS

TAG : PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: RIYADH QUADRIpartite MEETING "POSTPONED"

REF: (A) CAIRO 6892, (NOTAL), (B) CAIRO 6896 (NOTAL) (C)

CAIRO 6863 (NOTAL)

1. CANCELLATION DEPARTURE EARLY AFTERNOON MAY 19 OF PRIMIN SALIM AND FONMIN FAHMY FOR RIYADH WAS DEFINITELY LAST MINUTE DECISION. WITH DEPARTURE SCHEDULED FOR 1330, SAUDI EMBASSY RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL AT ABOUT 1400 FROM FAHMY'S OFFICE DIRECTOR TO SAY THE EGYPTIANS WERE DEFINITELY NOT RPT NOT GOING. UNTIL WELL AFTER 1200, MFA OFFICIALS STILL EXPECTED TO MAKE TRIP.

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2. WHAT HAPPENED? ACCORDING TO SAUDI EMBOFF, FIRST HINT THAT

EGYPTIANS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS CAME AFTERNOON MAY 18 WHEN PRESIDENCY INFORMED SAUDI EMBASSY THAT PRESIDENT WOULD BE ATTEMPTING CALL RIYADH. PHONE CALL WAS, THEREFORE, INITIATED BY SADAT, NOT BY KHALID, AS HAD BEEN ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED IN EGYPTIAN MEDIA (REF A). SAUDIS, HOWEVER, WERE SO SURE THAT EGYPTIAN DEL WOULD GO THAT SAUDI EMBASSY DELEGATION WAITED AT AIRPORT WITH LOCAL PRESS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOR PRIMIN WHO, OF COURSE, WAS NO SHOW.

3. FAHMY HIMSELF HAS SO FAR BEEN UNCOMMUNICATIVE ABOUT WHY POSTPONEMENT OCCURRED (REF B), IMPLYING ONLY THAT SAUDI AND KUWAITI SPONSORS HAD NOT YET ADEQUATELY PAVED WAY FOR MEETING. HE DID SAY, AS DID SAUDI EMBASSY, THAT SAG AND GOK FONMINS WILL ARRIVE CAIRO SATURDAY. UNLIKE FAHMY, SAUDI EMBOFF THOUGHT POSSIBILITY OF RIYADH MEETING OCCURRING NEXT WEEK IS STILL REMOTE.

4. RUMORS ARE FLYING IN CAIRO AS TO REASON FOR WHAT INITIALLY APPEARED HERE TO BE EGYPTIAN DECISION POSTPONE MEETING. WHILE MANY STORIES CENTER AROUND POSSIBLE LAST MINUTE REINJECTION OF HARD LINE ON SINAI II BY KHADDAM, JALLUD IS ALSO MENTIONED AS CULPRIT. SADAT'S NEW PRESS SECRETARY TOLD AMBASSADOR EVENING MAY 19 THAT JALLUD'S EFFORTS TO SABOTAGE MEETING HAD PAID OFF. IMPLICATION, OF COURSE, IS THAT JULLUD IN SOME WAY BOUGHT OFF SARG.

5. CAIRO PRESS MAY 20 DOES NOT EITHER PLAY UP POSTPONEMENT OR SPECULATE FOR REASONS FOR IT. ONLY GUMHURIYYA GIVES STORY BANNER-HEADLINE TREATMENT. EVEN THOUGH PRESS HAD STORY AT 1430 PREVIOUS AFTERNOON, THERE IS NO EDITORIAL COMMENT WHATSOEVER. IN COURSE OF ITS RAPPORTAGE, GUMHURIYYA SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT "SOME SOURCES IN KUWAIT (BUT MORE PROBABLY EGYPTIAN MFA SOURCES HERE) LINK POSTPONEMENT WITH JALLUD'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS, CLAIMING THAT HE OFFERED SARG AID AS ENTICEMENT FOR POSTPONEMENT. ABSENCE OF COMMENTARY, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT GOE IS DELIBERATELY KEEPING DOOR OPEN FOR MEETING AT LATER DATE.

6. SHATEVER JALLUD'S ROLE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, WE ARE STRUCK BY REPORT THAT SYRIAN BA'ATH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMMANDS BEGAN MEETING IN DAMASCUS MAY 18 (DAMASCUS 3144). GIVEN CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER CONSTRAINTS ON ASAD'S FREEDOM OF ACTION WHICH SUCH A MEETING COULD IMPOSE, ESPECIALLY AT TIME WHEN INTERNAL UNREST SEEMS TO BE SPREADING IN SYRIA (DAMASCUS 3146) IT WOULD APPEAR REASONABLE TO SPECULATE THAT POSTPONEMENT OF RIYADH CONFERENCE WAS GENERATED BY HARDENING OF SYRIAN POSITION, RATHER THAN ANY EGYPTIAN SECOND THOUGHTS.
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